

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Edzell-Rocks of Solitude Return (Angus/Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

A fairly long riverside walk, mostly in mature broadleaf woodland. Steep-sided cliffs are a common feature, especially in the Rocks of Solitude section. Throughout, the river alternates between surging rapids, deep pools and wide shallows, making for a very scenic experience.

Duration: 4 hours



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: There is an infrequent bus service from Brechin to Edzell. On-street parking on Edzell High Street.

Length: 10.000 km / 6.25 mi

Height Gain: 108 meter

Height Loss: 108 meter

Max Height: 108 meter

Min Height: 51 meter

Surface: Moderate. Generally fairly smooth riverside paths. May be slippery in wet conditions.

Child Friendly: Yes, but children MUST be closely supervised, especially in places where there are steep drops. In other respects, only if children are used to hikes of this distance and overall ascent.

Difficulty: Medium.

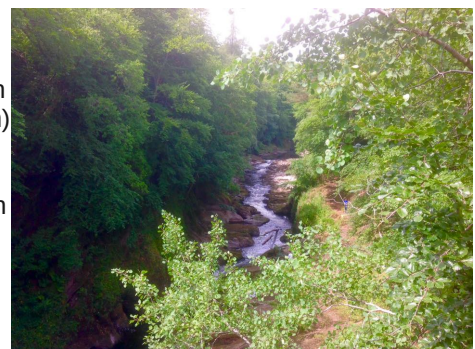
Dog Friendly: Yes. Must be under close control at all times. On lead on public roads.

Refreshments: Options in Edzell.



Description

There are many stunning riverside views on this walk from the pleasant Angus town of Edzell, positioned on the border between Angus and Aberdeenshire at the entrance to the high ground of Glen Esk. This walk is at the upper end of our distance preference (10 km) and it should be noted that there are sections where there are steep drops to the river, sometimes with fenced barriers, sometimes not. However, the route is quite safe if normal levels of care and attention are applied by the walker. Children should be closely supervised at all times. The route is mostly within mature broadleaf woodland and alternates between a high level, looking down on the rapids and pools of the River North Esk where the grandeur of the river flow is most evident, and closer to riverbank level where the river is wider and shallower. Salmon may be seen from above, either resting in the pools or making their way up-river at the rapids. Near the turning point, the route enters the area known, rather poetically, as "The Rocks of Solitude" This is an impressive rocky gorge with gushing rapids where the steep-sided gorge narrows. The "Shakin Brig", a narrow pedestrian bridge, may be crossed depending on what return route is taken to Edzell (see Waypoint 13). A couple of ruined stone buildings are encountered and there are fine views up to hills of Glen Esk in places where the tree cover clears.



See also: <http://www.angus.gov.uk/sites/angus-cms/files/2017-09/Glen%20Esk%20Path%20Network.pdf>

Waypoints

(1) Start at noticeboard and go down Gassy Brae

(56.81006; -2.65579)

The walk starts and finishes in the middle of Edzell High Street, beside the petrol station. There is a community noticeboard on the gable-end wall of a shop, and a sign indicating that the lane leads to the Gassy Brae and the River North Esk riverside walks. Go down the lane and follow the path as it veers to the left. The path is going up-river. Soon you will pass the "Shakin Brig" (at the end of the walk you will cross the bridge from the other side). Continue following the riverside path for over 2 km.



(2) Right to cross bridge

(56.82765; -2.65692)

After 2.2 km, where the riverside path meets the B966 road, turn right and cross the Gannochy Bridge. Take care as there is no pavement. You are looking for a blue door in a wall across the road, just after the bridge. (2.2 km)



(3) Left through blue door

(56.82802; -2.65639)

In about 100 m, cross the road with care and enter through the blue door into the Burn House estate. Now follow the path into the trees, close to the riverside. (2.3 km)



(4) Veer slightly left to follow riverside path down slope

(56.83343; -2.66412)

In 800 m, avoiding an option to your right, veer slightly left to follow the riverside path down a slope. (3.1 km)



(5) Go left at y-junction

(56.84261; -2.67062)

In another 1.2 km, go left at a y-junction in the paths to continue on the riverside path. (4.3 km)



(6) Left again and down to follow riverside

(56.84388; -2.67432)

In 300 m, at a y-junction, go left again and down to follow the riverside path. The path now takes you into the poetically named "Rocks of Solitude" area where the river runs through narrow gorge, with rapids and deep pools. You may see salmon leaping here. (4.6 km)



(7) Carry on up main path

(56.84552; -2.67643)

In 200 m, carry on up the main path where there is an option your left to descend down the gorge. (4.8 km)



(8) Right here to start return

(56.84658; -2.67525)

In another 200 m, at a t-junction, the path has risen to a higher point than before and you can see fields and farm buildings. This is your turning point to start your return to Edzell. Go right here. (5.0 km)



(9) Carry on walking on broad ridge

(56.84448; -2.67407)

In 300 m, where there is an option on your right to descend to the riverside path, continue straight on, walking at the higher level through the woods. Carry on walking on this broad ridge, above the riverside path, until you eventually re-join your outward route. (5.3 km)



(10) Veer left to join rough track nearer to fields

(56.83163; -2.66090)

In 1.8 km, or so, you will see fields on your left, a short distance through the trees. Veer slightly left to take a rough track nearer to the fields than the riverside path you have been on. (7.1 km)



(11) Right onto estate access road

(56.83120; -2.65940)

In just over 100 m you will arrive at a t-junction with a stone-paved estate access road. Go right here along the road. (7.2 km)



(12) Right and down towards bridge

(56.82847; -2.65550)

In 400 m you will have arrived at the main entrance into the Burn House estate. Go right here and downhill towards the Gannochy bridge that you crossed earlier in the walk. You are looking for an entrance to a riverside path, across the road to your left, just before the bridge. (7.6 km)



(13) Cross road and right down path

(56.82797; -2.65631)

In about 100 m, across the road from the blue door, is the entrance to the riverside path, on the opposite side from the path you took on the early part of the outward leg. Cross the road with care and follow this path along the river. (7.7 km)

Note: there is a short but steep descent to river level in about 1.4 km. It is a tricky descent over tree roots and may be very slippery in wet conditions. You may choose to use the path on the other side of the river, the one you took on the initial outward section, to avoid this descent. Also, if the river level is high, this path is not advised. Use the one you took on the initial outward section instead to return to Edzell. In these situations, cross the bridge and go left to take the Edzell path.



(14) Right down short but steep ascent to river level

(56.81606; -2.64927)

In 1.4 km, with fields now on your left side, the path descends steeply to river-bank level. This short descent is over tree roots and requires to be negotiated with care. Carry on walking along the riverbank path to the Shakin Brig. (9.1 km)

Note: There is an option to avoid the steep descent and instead cross the fence into the edge of the field and carry on at that level until you arrive at the point where the Shakin Brig is, allowing you to return to the centre of Edzell. If neither the steep descent nor the fields option is attractive, re-trace your steps back to the Gannochy Bridge and take the path you took on the initial outward section back to Edzell.



(15) Right across Shakin Brig

(56.81110; -2.65271)

In 600 m you will have arrived at the Shakin Brig. Cross the bridge and then turn left to re-trace your steps up the Gassy Brae back to the start point on Edzell High Street. (9.7 km)



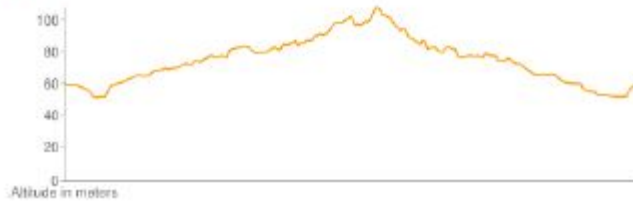
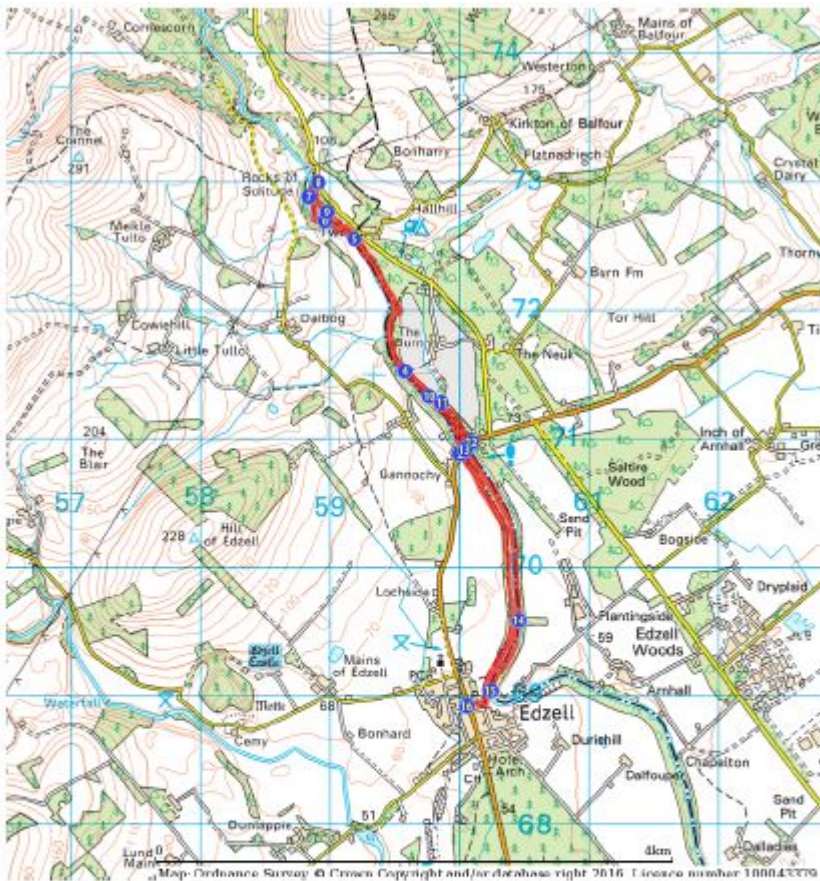
(16) Finish walk at start point

(56.81002; -2.65572)

In about 300 m you are back at your start-point beside the petrol station on Edzell High Street. (10.0 km)



Route Map



Links:

[Photos from walk](#)

[Download Route Guide](#) (PDF with illustrated Waypoints)

[Download GPX file](#) (GPS Exchange Format)

[Access Walk on Viewranger](#)

[Access Walk on Wikiloc](#)